



WEST NILE VIRUS has continued to spread throughout the United States since the virus was first discovered in New York in 1999. Since that time, the virus has spread to 48 states including California, and to Canada and Mexico.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, West Nile Virus was recognized as a cause of severe human meningitis and encephalitis in elderly patients as early as 1957.

West Nile Virus is carried and transmitted primarily by mosquitoes. In California, the virus has been detected in mosquitoes and in birds.

Most people who get infected will not become seriously ill. However, the elderly and those with weakened immune systems are most susceptible to illness caused by the virus.

In this year's budget, the Governor has provided more resources for early detection, testing and tracking of West Nile Virus in California.

This brochure will provide you with important information and resources that will help you understand what West Nile Virus is and how to help protect yourself and your family.



What are state and local agencies doing to control the spread of West Nile Virus (WNV)?

- California has a long history of conducting surveillance for mosquito-borne viruses and has taken active steps to ensure early detection of WNV. Due to ongoing collaboration between over 70 local mosquito and vector control agencies and state public agencies, California is well-prepared to detect, monitor, and respond to WNV. These agencies use a variety of scientific techniques and products to control mosquitoes in their earliest stages and play a key role in reducing the risk of WNV. Also California has launched a statewide public education effort about personal protection measures and reporting dead birds.

Why is the public urged to report dead birds?

- The public is encouraged to assist in the efforts to detect and monitor WNV by calling the WNV hotline if they find a bird that has been dead for about a day. Birds play an important role in maintaining and spreading this virus. Mosquitoes acquire the virus from infected birds and then transmit the virus to people. Evidence of the virus in dead birds is often the first indication that WNV has been introduced into a new region. California Department of Health Services has set up a statewide toll-free hotline for the public to report dead birds: **877-WNV-BIRD**. Dead birds may also be reported online at www.westnile.ca.gov

What are the symptoms and treatment?

- Most people who are bitten by a mosquito with WNV will not get sick. People who do become ill may experience mild to moderate flu-like symptoms like fever, headache and body ache. It is estimated that less than 1% of the people who are infected with WNV become severely ill and require hospitalization. The elderly and immunocompromised are particularly susceptible to illness caused by WNV.
- Currently there is no specific treatment for WNV infection. Since it is a virus it does not respond to antibiotics. In severe cases, hospitalization and supportive care is important.
- If you have symptoms of West Nile Virus, call your doctor.

How can people protect themselves?

- Avoid spending time outside at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are active, especially during the two hours after sunset.
- When outdoors wear long pants, long sleeve shirts and other protective clothing.
- Apply insect repellent containing DEET according to label instructions.
- Make sure that doors and windows have tight-fitting screens with no tears or holes.
- Eliminate sources of standing water that can support mosquito breeding.

IMPORTANT RESOURCES

California Dept. of Health Services

WEB www.westnile.ca.gov

Centers for Disease Control

West Nile Virus homepage

WEB www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/

Centers for Disease Control

Public response hotline (toll free)

TEL 888.246.2675 (English)

TEL 888.246.2857 (Español)

TTY 866.874.2646

U.S. Geological Survey

West Nile Virus maps

WEB westnilemaps.usgs.gov

California Dept. of Food & Agriculture

WEB www.cdffa.ca.gov

Mosquito and Vector Control

Association of California

WEB www.mvcac.org

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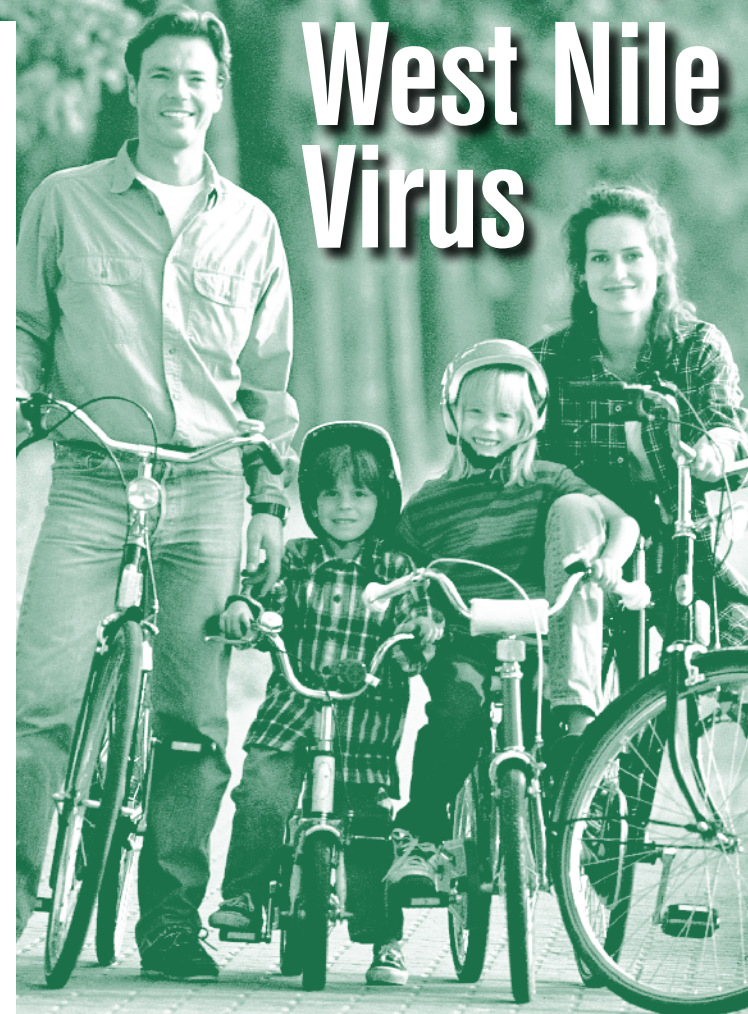
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protecting you and your family from

West Nile Virus



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